

WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Rep. Harry Mitchell today said he will monitor the progress of the Carl T. Hayden VA Medical Center as the staff works to implement recommendations made by the Department of Veterans' Affairs Inspector General following an inspection of the facility.

The Inspector General's office conducted a site visit of the Carl Hayden facility from Dec. 4 to Dec. 6, 2006. The report detailing its findings was released today, and is available at <http://www.w.va.gov/oig/54/reports/VAOIG-07-00589-118.pdf>

The Inspector General issued five recommendations to the facility director – ranging from ensuring the activities of unlicensed physicians engaging in VA research adhere to their scope of practice to reviewing all conflict of interest policies. According to the Inspector General, four of the five recommendations have already been met, and the fifth is scheduled for completion on April 28. [Source: [VA Inspector General Report](#) , April 20, 2007]

"I appreciate how quickly the Carl Hayden Medical Center has responded to the recommendations of the Inspector General," said Mitchell. "When I toured the facility last month, I was impressed with how the staff took pride in caring for our veterans, but it was clear to me that the hospital is understaffed and lacking the resources it needs. We need to continue to work together in a bipartisan way to ensure these professionals have the tools they need to provide high quality care to veterans."

Mitchell, who serves as chairman of the House Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, toured the Hayden VA facility in March. He has expressed concern that the facility is "underfunded and understaffed in the wake of the Iraq war." [Source: [The Arizona Republic](#), April 13, 2007]

Reports of understaffing at veterans' facilities are widespread. Today, the [USA TODAY](#) reported, "The number of returning Iraq and Afghanistan combat veterans visiting Department of Veterans' Affairs walk-in clinics has more than doubled since 2004, while the clinics' staff has increased by less than 10%, agency records show." [Source: [USA TODAY](#) , April 20, 2007]